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Binge-drinking law call

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CHILDREN supplied with alcohol by people other than their parents are up to six times more likely to binge drink, a study has found.

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The Australian Drug Foundation is expected to release today some of the findings of a Deakin University study that questioned nearly 4000 children aged between 10 and 14 on under-age drinking.

Foundation chief executive John Rogerson said only Queensland and Tasmania had laws penalising the supply of alcohol to people aged under 18 without parental consent.

"We believe children in Victoria, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia and the Northern Territory are at greater risk of alcohol-related harms without this legislation," Mr Rogerson said in a statement.

Among the study's key findings were that children who obtained alcohol from people other than parents are up to six times more likely to binge drink.

It was also found that adolescents reporting the presence of family conflict were more likely to obtain alcohol from a person other than a parent.

The more friends a child has who drink alcohol, the more likely that child is to obtain alcohol from people other than a parent, the study said.

"We know that when young people binge drink, they are more at risk of harms such as sexual assault, injury or even death," Mr Rogerson said.

"It can also set children up for a lifetime of heavy drinking."

The Australian Drug Foundation said a law was needed that put parents in control of their children's drinking.

"Medical researchers advise that alcohol can cause irreparable damage to the developing brain and children should be encouraged to delay drinking," Mr Rogerson said.

"We need stricter laws to protect our children from the harms associated with drinking alcohol - particularly as adolescence is such a critical time for brain development."

Deakin University's school of psychology is due to release a paper within months that explains the findings in greater detail.

AAP

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/bingedrinking-law-call-20101107-17iyb.html>